WHIRRAKEE

June 2006 Vol. 27 No. 5

Registered by Australia Post. Publication No. VBH4462

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3552
ISSN 0812-423X

Office Bearers for 2005 - 2006

President	Matthew Comer	46 Railway Place, Goornong	5432 2380
Senior Vice President	Stuart Fraser	12 Bambara Close, Bendigo	
Junior Vice President	Anne Bridley		5449 3479.
Secretary	Anne Bridley		5449 3479.
Minute Secretary	Jan Orr	2 Cockerel Court, Bendigo	5443 5668
	(with Peter Ellis as assistant)		
Treasurer	Stuart Fraser		
Membership Officer	Kate Lottkowitz	80 Piccaninny Rd, RSD Strathfieldsaye	5439 3157
Excursion organiser	Richard Goonan		0423418815
Syllabus organiser	Rod Orr	2 Cockerel Court, Bendigo	5443 5668
	(an assistant's position for the syllabus organiser is still vacant)		
Librarian	Diana Collier	31 Milroy Street, Bendigo	5443 0137
Garden Convenor/Secretary	Matthew Comer	46 Railway Place, Goornong	5432 2380
Hall Management	Maurie Lewis (assisted by Darren White)		0407 427179
Whirrakee contact	Sabine Wilkens	82 Somerville Street, Bendigo	5443 2797
		e-mail: s.wilkens@latrobe.edu.au	

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The invited speaker at general meetings starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper.
If a workshop is held prior to the meeting, it will be advertised and it usually starts at 7.00pm.
The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Ben Goonan, Richard Goonan, Bill Holsworth, Rob Moors, Rod Orr, Bob Ruddick, Darren White.

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. In addition to local excursions, campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one active group that meets regularly (the Fauna Study Group) and other groups that meet at irregular intervals.

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observers Group: This group has field excursions and the occasional lecture evening. Please consult the *Whirrakee* for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5449 3479.
To propose meetings or excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front cover photo?...see page 2.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 27, No. 5, June 2006

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

CONTENT

Item	Contributor	Page
Short Notices (including the next two excursions)	Richard Goonan	3
Eggs in one basket? No fear!	Thomas Burton	4
May General Meeting: Speaker Carol Hall	Sabine Wilkens	5
Salomon's Gully Flora Reserve	Peter Ellis	7
Bumblebees on the mainland? Have your say..		10
More news after Cyclone Larry	Darren Green and Jo Carnsew	10
...and Cyclone Monica	David and Jenny Shield	11

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
The cover photo reminds us of an important role the club is playing by encouraging members to be involved with the community and passing on our understanding of nature and enthusiasm for conservation. Maurie Lewis' enthusiasm does not need any encouragement, he has an endless supply of it, however, the club did support this activity by paying for the trees and the bus hire. On June 5 (World Environment Day) Maurie has organised for the same group of children to visit Kennington Reservoir to learn about water birds. Several members have volunteered to help Maurie on that day. Thank you all for helping on such occasions.

Front Cover Photographs – Tree Planting with Laurel Street Primary School
Photographer: Bill Holsworth

Maurie Lewis and John Green are encouraging children, teachers and parents to learn more about natural history and care for the environment. On 20 April, Maurie and John, with the help of two groups of 30 children in years 3-4 at Laurel Street Primary School, planted trees at Faugh-a Ballaugh Flora Reserve area (part of Diamond Hill Historic Reserve). Maurie gave the children a short talk on the importance of the forests and parks around Bendigo. After he encouraged them to identify the birds in the forest by listening to their song, the children climbed into the bus cawing like ravens.

Short Notices

Birds Australia Campout Sat 10 - Mon 12 June Wychitella area

Club members are invited to join Birds Australia on the Queens Birthday weekend for a campout in the Wychitella area.

On Saturday we will be meeting David Baker-Gabb at the Australian Bush Heritage property adjoining Mt Korong.

This property has a good population of ground-dwelling birds such as Yellow Robin, White-browed Babblers, Brown Treecreepers and is well worth a visit.

For further information contact:
Euan Fothergill ph 93081289 email euanfothergill@hotmail.com
or Anne Bridley ph 544934

To see the report 'The State of Australia's Birds 2005: Woodlands and Birds' go to http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/birds-05/index.html

---

Saturday JUNE 17th Excursion - Bendigo Region Landscapes

Following the local excursion theme from April and May, our June excursion will be looking at the landscapes of this region and some of the influences that different geological processes have had in shaping the associated flora.
Leaving Golden Square at 8.00am we will make our way to One Tree Hill Lookout for the first stop, following this, we will have a short walk through the "ecological burn" area just below the tower, before heading south into the granite of Harcourt. During the day we will make our way across to the Campaspe River and north to return home through the Whipstick.

Bring your lunch and snacks, warm clothes, jumper and jacket. Cost is $10, free if you drive yourself.
Please let Richard know if you plan to attend (ph 0423418815).

JULY Excursion – Blackwood, Wombat Forest Fungi: FNCV

NOTE change of Date: Excursion will be on **SUNDAY 2 JULY**

The Fungi excursion for July is sure to be a rewarding day for any adventurous naturalists who are willing to rug up and join us for a trip to the southern parts of the Wombat Forest around Blackwood, to join the FNCV fungi group on their monthly excursion.

This will be a great opportunity to revisit the area that we walked for the March excursion. Warm clothing is a must for this trip and you will need a waterproof jacket and over-pants if you have them. I may be able to bring one or two spares, please let me know if you need them. Gumboots may be useful, and a camera would be recommended.

Leaving at 8.30 am to meet at the Garden of St Earth car park just off Symonds Reef Rd at 10.30 am. The day will involve short walks, full of looking and hunting around. Cost will be $20.00, returning approximately 5.00pm.

P.S. A report of the May excursion will appear in the July Whirrakee (ed.)

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club garden is ten years old

There will be a working bee on the

8th July, starting at 1pm.

To celebrate this event we will put in some new plants, do some general maintenance and have afternoon tea.

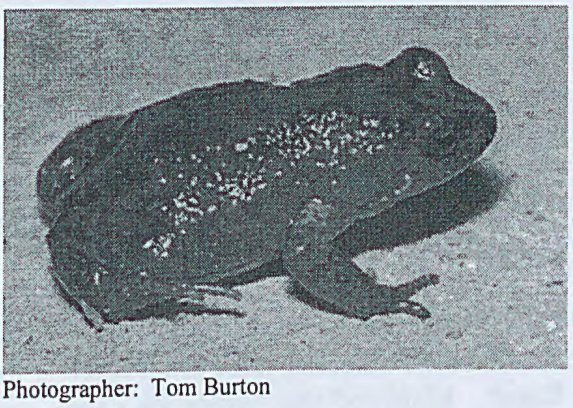
Absolutely everybody is welcome!

Eggs in One Basket? No fear!

Author: Tom Burton

I recently attended the annual meeting of the Australian Society of Herpetologists in Healesville. There were over 100 professional herpetologists from museums, university and government departments present, and about 95 presentations of various sorts, on a variety of topics related to the biology of reptiles and amphibians. I report here a couple of the more interesting things (that is, things about frogs) I learned at the conference. Actually, the most interesting things for me related to frog taxonomy, but I shan't burden you with them.

The first story relates to *Pseudophryne bibroni,* the Common Toadlet of our region.



Photographer: Tom Burton

When the autumn rains come, each female toadlet lays its eggs in a depression occupied by a male toadlet, which mates with the female, fertilizes the eggs, and guards the nest until rains wash the emerging tadpoles into the nearest pond.

This is a dicey way of doing things, because the hollows are often flooded, trampled, or otherwise ruined before the tadpoles are ready. Now, female frogs usually drop all of their eggs at one sitting, for example, a female Cane Toad may lay tens of thousands of eggs at one go. Not so the female toadlet. She lays eggs by the few rather than the thousand, and rather than dropping the lot in one mating session, she is polyandrous -- she will mate with one male, depositing some of her eggs in his nest, and then mate with a series of other males, depositing some of her eggs in each of several nests.

DNA analysis of the larvae in nests indicates that females spread their eggs across up to eight nests. The advantage of female promiscuity is fairly obvious in this sort of risky set-up; the mathematics of the advantage of spreading the eggs are even more striking than the intuitive "Don't put all your eggs in one basket" would suggest, but don't ask me to do them.

My second story relates to the dreaded Cane Toad itself. A team from Sydney University reported that the invasion of Darwin is not going according to expectations. First, the invasion front is going at frenetic speed: 55km per year in all directions. Individual frogs are travelling up to 1.8km per night. These are record invasion speeds, far in excess of what was expected.

Surprisingly, the invasion front just passed through Fogg Dam, where the Sydney scientists are based, that is, the first toads bred in the dam, and they and the young moved on, so that there are no toads left at Fogg Dam. Presumably there will be some infill later, but for now, the scientists are perplexed. They had expected a slow incremental spread, with the population spreading gradually into new pond, breeding, and a permanent population becoming established.

As part of their study of how the native predators respond to the toads, the scientists carried out a rather nasty, scary set of experiments involving the Common Planigale *Planigale maculatus*. The planigale is a fierce, fearless little predator, a killing machine that includes frogs in its diet. It resembles a mini-Tuan. Juvenile Cane Toads (i.e., newly metamorphosed

toads) are already poisonous at a young age, and more likely to be prey than adult toads, which may be the size of dinner plates, or, at least, bread-and-butter plates.

The experiment involved placing a planigale in a box with a little hidey-hole in the corner, then introducing a prey item, either a juvenile Cane Toad or a native frog. The risk, of course, was that Cane Toads would be lethal to planigales, but sadly, this sort of work has to be done if we are to understand how our wild-life will be affected by the toads.

As soon as a prey was dropped in, the planigale darted out of its hidey-hole and attacked. Whenever a planigale grabbed the native frog, it just killed the frog and ate it, but when it grabbed a toad, it killed the toad, dropped the dead toad very quickly, and went into a coma. Surprisingly, the vast majority (81%) of planigales recovered, to the relief of the researchers.

We were shown a video of what happened when a toad was dropped in with an "experienced" planigale -- one that had already had a Cane Toad encounter. The planigale rushed out to attack, threw on its brakes like Wiley Coyote, and shrunk back into its hidey hole, looking decidedly unhappy. Interestingly, an "experienced" planigale reacted similarly when a native frog was dropped in. Thus, the planigale's learned response to Cane Toads was carried over to native frogs, which were now no longer prey items for the planigales.

But not for long. After a couple of weeks, the planigales learned to distinguish the poisonous toads from the harmless native frogs, and the protection of the native frogs fell away.

It seems from this work that planigales, at least, will be able to survive the Cane Toad plague.

The Sydney group also reported that Cane Toads are very selective when choosing a pond to breed in. They prefer ponds with gently sloping, bare banks and shallow water; they certainly do not like steep, densely vegetated banks. This gives a hope that the landscape could be managed to restrict the suitable breeding sites for Cane Toads.

These reports were relatively optimistic. Whereas the scientists realize that the invasion of the Darwin area is in its early days, and that disappointment may not be far away, it is nice to feel a bit hopeful for a little while.

May General Meeting
Speaker Carol Hall – Western Australia in 2004

Carol, a geographer (first), a photographer (second) and botanist (?) is well-known to many of our members. Perhaps that is why the hall was full despite the wintery weather on the night.
We settled in for a tour of Western Australia that Carol took before attending the ANN conference in 2004.

Being a geographer, the limestone coast area of the Nullarbor is of great interest to Carol. Many of the numerous caves are not fully explored and there are also many historical markers, like the old telegraph station near Eucla, that make good subjects for photography. For some reason, photos from there always look spectacular, windswept and deserted (not by the animals though, as many intriguing foot prints in the sand near the station building demonstrated).

Carol went on to Esperance which is like a lake district with RAMSAR status. We saw many interesting plants from there, including a female *Macrozamia*, cowslip orchids, *Templetonia*, caladenias and the most glorious banksias in flower.

Further along the coast between Esperance and Albany is the Fitzgerald National Park, a biodiversity hotspot, in spite (but probably because) its prevailing poor soils. Four thousand species of flowering plants are found here, of which 80% are endemic. Carol had a sample of these for us with *Dampiera*, blue tinsel lily, *Verticordia*, *Isopogon* and the spectacular yellow-flowering bell-fruited mallee *E. preissiana.*

Around the beautiful forest of tingle trees (*Eucalyptus jacksonii*) at Walpole, there is a famous tree-top board walk where people can walk around on the level of the canopy. Carol thinks however, that the more interesting sights are down below.

Further west begins the karri forest and the geology changes to Precambrian rocks. Pemberton has a higher rainfall and some of the flowering plants at the time of Carol's visit were the Tree Hovea (*H. elliptica*) and the Karri Boronia. Maidenhair fern was growing on the base of many eucalypts.

The jarrah forests typically grow on laterite soils which are soils that have been heavily leached. The minerals left behind are responsible for its intense colouration.

In to the Margaret River area, there is more to experience than the great outdoors, but this, however, is still stunning. Carol showed us photos of amazing orchids from here, the pansy orchid, some wonderful and bizarre spider orchids and the shiniest orchid of them all, the purple enamel orchid.

Northwards towards Perth after Bunbury are some elongated hypersaline lakes close to the coast that have stromatolites in them. These large boulder-like structures originate form colonies of blue-green bacteria or cyanobacteria (used to be called blue-green algae) that have been growing for thousands of years. Their growth rate is slow indeed, at about one millimetre a year. During the day these bacteria grow upwards in the sunlight and the colonies then act as sediment traps. Thus each stromatolite is finely laminated.
Stromatolites can also be found in other parts of Western Australia. At Shark Bay, their age is estimated to be 1000 million years, while the fossil stromatolites inland in WA are up to 3000 million years old.

Just inland of Perth there are some granite landscape features, for example the East Darling Scarp on which some unusual plants grow (e.g. the one-sided bottlebrush).

Carol then took us to Penguin Island where there were breeding Fairy Penguins and Pelicans. Other animals we saw were the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, bilbies, Rufous Hare Wallaby and Woilies (Brush-tailed Bettong).

Feral cats and foxes have caused havoc amongst these animal species but in Western Australia, the program using 1080 as bait has been fairly successful. The reason why this is different to the 1080 story in eastern Australia is that several native shrubs in WA, in particular species of *Gastrolobium* naturally contain large concentrations of sodium fluoroacetate, the active ingredient in 1080. As a result, the native animals who have evolved alongside these plants' chemicals have become insensitive to them, while introduced mammals like foxes succumb.
In addition some reserves are enclosed with feral proof fences.

After some more beautiful flower photos of *Lechenaultia*, *Darwinia*, grass trees and even a Gymea Lily (from NSW), taken at the Gravity Discovery Centre (a visit to which was part of the ANN conference), Carol finished in central Perth's premier showpiece, King's Park – what a place!

It was a really great slide show and has definitely put Western Australia on my list of 'must go and see' in the next few years.

Salomon's Gully Flora Reserve

By Peter Ellis

An attractive setting in Quarry Hill with views over the Bendigo suburbs of Flora Hill and Spring Gully, Salomon's Gully is a box/ironbark community with an understorey of totem poles, golden wattle, Austfeld's wattle, hedge wattle, daphne heath, drooping cassinia (Chinese scrub), various 'eggs and bacons' and Bendigo waxflower. The dominant tree is red ironbark (*Eucalyptus tricarpa*) and stands of other eucalypts include red box, grey box, yellow gum and stringy bark. Many of these trees support growths of mistletoe. There is also possibly a stand of slaty sheoke (a Whipstick plant) on the ridge as well as on the Bellevue Road side of the Quarry Hill Golf Course. One of the original six or eight City Boundary Stones carved out of sandstone was located in the area. It was later removed by Land's Department officer and Bendigo Field Naturalists club member, Berry Vardy for protection from the golf green excavation and then donated back to the city. It was meant to be displayed in the foyer of the Municipal Offices; I don't know where it has eventually been put. On private property adjoining the Golf Course and Flora Reserve are said to be small deep Aboriginal rock holes (drinking wells) excavated into the sandstone reef.

As with most areas in a 30 kilometre radius of Bendigo (exception Big Hill range) Salomon's Gully would have been clear felled for timber for mining activities from the middle nineteenth century to the early twentieth century and prospecting and surface fossicking for gold would have occurred in the area. A painting in the Bendigo Art Gallery shows a view towards the denuded Quarry Hill area in the 1860s.

In the 1950s this area of bushland adjacent to the Quarry Hill Golf Course was a popular place for nature studies for pupils from the Quarry Hill State School with second grade teacher, Miss Tredinnick. The nature studies were broad range and included noting the types of birds, lizards, wildflowers, rocks and trees in the area and well as looking for fossils, and studying aquatic life, tadpoles etc in the small dams. Children in those days had their interests raised by regularly listening to nature notes by Crosbie Morrison on the wireless.

One of the local founders of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club (1946) and world renowned ornithologist and Chemistry teacher at the Bendigo School of Mines photographed mistletoe birds and painted honeyeaters in the Salomon's Gully area. He was often accompanied by local historian, the late Frank Cusack who ensured many of Redvers Eddy's famous photographs were preserved in the Annals of Bendigo. One such photograph taken at Salomen's Gully pictures the parent mistletoe bird sitting on Redvers Eddy's finger while feeding mistletoe seeds to the young at the nest. Mistletoe birds weave their sack shaped nests from spider webs and one which was damaged in a storm was sewn back together with needle and cotton thread by Mr. Eddy.

In the late 1960s other local field naturalists, namely Mal Hopkins and Jack Ipsen (now nearly 98) were making observations on the range of different birds to be seen in the area during their lunch hours as well as photographing the various ground orchids including salmon sun-orchids which caught their eye. As a result of Mal and Jack's interest and their reports during notes and observations at the Field Naturalist Club meetings when I was Secretary of the BFNC, I revisited the Salomon's Gully area in the spring of 1971. I had been a pupil of Miss Tredinnick's at Quarry Hill State School in grade two in 1953 and had regularly explored the area since those nature study days. The spring of 1971 was a particularly good one and on walking to the Salomon's

Gully ridge from Boyd Street I was held in awe at the amazing view over the cemetery and Flora Hill and the masses of Golden Wattle and Austfeld's Wattle rising from the foot of the hill at the rear of the cemetery and amongst the striking black fissured trunks of the ironbarks, all the way up the slope. Furthermore the display of Bendigo waxflower was truly magnificent and proved to be the most massed stand of this locally revered wildflower in the greater Bendigo area. As well as this, Austfeld's Wattle is endemic to the Bendigo-Heathcote district and Salomon's Gully is certainly one of the best display areas of it. In the 1960s Austfeld's Wattle was known as a form of Leper Wattle (*Acacia leprosa*) and the distinctive white specks from which the leper tag is associated are clearly visible on the phyllodes (flattened stems adapted and acting as leaves). Then it was discovered this now distinct species had first been collected by a Russian botanist, Austfeld, with the type specimen held in a Russian herbarium and therefore the plant was revised and named after him (*Acacia ausfeldii*).

I suggested we make a submission to the Bendigo City Council to have the area created a flora reserve. It was Cemetery Reserve, but would not be used for extending the cemetery as the ground was too rocky and shallow. There was also a school reserve adjoining the cemetery reserve and included in the proposal late in 1971. Although no formal reply was received from the City Council it was reported in an editorial of the Bendigo Advertiser early 1972 that the proposal had been endorsed by council and that the reserve would be managed under parks and gardens by Director John Beaumont.

A few months later on visiting the ridge at Salomon's Gully I noticed a four wheel drive land-rover parked on the top with several men appearing to be surveying the area. On enquiring about their activity they said they were from the PMG (Post Master General's Department) and carrying out routine work. I thought nothing more of this until later when friends from Melbourne, Alan and Bobbie Malone had given me some Nodding Greenhood Orchids transplanted from bushland about to be cleared. I took the orchids up to Salomon's Gully to relocate them when to my horror I found a swathe of trees from the golf course boundary and over the ridge had been bulldozed right down to the cemetery fence, ending in a nicely clean graded circular patch. Rubbish in the form of fill and concrete was also dumped on the ridge and later removed when the Flora Reserve was created. A quick phone call to the Post Office revealed no survey work had been carried out at Salomon's Gully by the PMG. It turned out the Quarry Hill Golf Club had been given permission by the City Engineer (Rex Anderson) who was conveniently overseas on long service, to extend their course with three new fairways. Presumably the surveyors had something to do with this. The Golf Club at the time had three fairways that required players to walk over and cross back between Bellevue Road and the Faugh a Ballaugh side. It was their wish, understandably to consolidate the course within one area and not to need to traverse what today has become a fairly busy road. I was also well acquainted with the golf course as I learnt to play there and at one time was a practise member and understood their predicament. The City Council supposedly had made their decision re the Flora Reserve but the Engineer had acted in 'anticipation' of a plan for the golf course that had not gone before Council. It resulted in an impasse between the Engineering Department and Parks and Gardens as well as between the Golf Club and Field Naturalists with the Council sitting on the fence. Needless to say the Cemetery Trust and the Lands Department had not been approached for any formal use of the land in which they were managers. A compromise plan was

agreed by all concerned with a diagonal line drawn on a map which divided a small amount of bush on one side for the golf club to extend and leaving the majority of the best waxflower area in the proposed flora reserve. The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club was successful in applying for and receiving a $1,000 grant from the Winifred Waddell Estate managed by the Native Plants Preservation of Victoria, to be donated to the Bendigo City Council to be used towards developing the Flora Reserve and in having the Council declare Bendigo Waxflower floral emblem of the city. Frank Cusack mentions the Council decision to create the reserve and adopt the Bendigo waxflower as Floral Emblem of the City in the Annals of Bendigo, April 1972. President of the BFNC, Bob Allen, who lived less than a block from the cemetery, made up a complete census of flora of the Salomon's Gully area. In those days we did not know the name Salomon's Gully and referred to the area as the proposed 'Boyd St. Reserve'. However just before the return from long service leave of the City Engineer, the Golf Club produced the Engineer's 'thumbnail in tar' (really pencil) sketch of the original planned golf course extension. They revived their campaign to extend their fairways right through to the cemetery just as Rex Anderson returned and retired as Engineer.

Subsequently the newly appointed City Engineer, Colin Ackehurst, adhered to the compromise plan and the diagonal line between planned Flora Reserve and Golf Course extension became known as the 'Ackehurst Line'. Pressure to deviate from the Ackehurst Line and include more of the bushland in the proposed consolidation of the golf course was strong and occurred several times over the period from 1972 to 1974 and at a period when the Field Naturalists Club was also embroiled with the Bendigo City Council in trying to establish the Jackass Flat Flora Reserve and save it from the proposed Dai Gum San development, as well as striving to establish a Whipstick National Park and protect private lands from Collins Street type land speculation.

The club sought assistance from the Conservation Council of Victoria with whom it was a member. They sent up a conservationist (Mr Dawson?) from the Macedon Ranges who had a lot of experience in saving the parts of the Mt. Macedon area. He took one look at the Salomon's Gully situation and urged we apply for the lot (including the Quarry Hill Golf Course) as Flora Reserve. I didn't want to do this and had no desire to upset the Golf Club; however that was his stand 'APPLY FOR THE LOT'. Within days of the club sending off the application for the greater flora reserve, officials in their smart dark suits from the Victorian Lands Department arrived in their shiny black limousine at my Reginald St. residence of the day. *This is what you want to accept as a reserve isn't it?* The area on the plans produced was basically the modified proposal delineated by the 'Ackehurst Line'. I imagine the Golf Club was presented with a similar ultimatum and we all lived happily ever after. The Salomon's Gully Flora Reserve was ultimately created, the name becoming known to us for the first time, and the Quarry Hill Golf Course consolidated on one site within the Bellevue Road boundary. Later the Conservation Department of the day developed a loop walking track as well as an interpretive shelter with notice board and pictures. This was fairly quickly vandalised but over the years the flora reserve has survived to become a favourite spot with many interested in nature. Some control of introduced plants has been necessary on the cemetery boundary of the reserve and these plants had spread from an earlier dwelling now only evidenced by the ruins of remaining sandstone foundations. The weeds that are of concern, mainly towards the lower slopes on the cemetery boundary are Cape Broom, Tree Lucerne, Periwinkle, Bridal

Creeper, the odd Cootamundra Wattle, Briar Rose, a suckering tree, think it's African, but don't know the name, Bob Allen knew what it was. There are also Freesias and Shell Grass.

Bumblebees on the mainland?

The Australian Hydroponics and Greenhouse Association (AHGA) has again applied to the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) to allow the importation of the European Bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) to the Australian mainland. The AHGA says that their industry will financially benefit from having the bumblebee pollinate their tomatos, and are dismissing the opposition to the plan as coming from 'ill-informed environment groups' who use 'emotive arguments'. The proponents have prepared a report assessing the potential environmental impact of amending the 'List of Specimens Suitable for Live Import', under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
There are several ways you can act if you are concerned about this issue:

1). If you have good knowledge of the bee issue, you might like to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard) and have your say as part of the departmental assessment process by commenting on the AHGA report. This is available on the DEH website at:
http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/invitecomment/bombus-terrestris.html
(This is actually a very interesting website in its own right and worth checking out anyway, ed.)

Comments must be made by **Friday 16 June 2006**. Comments should be addressed to: **The Director**
Science and Natural Resources
Department of the Environment and Heritage
GPO Box 787, Canberra ACT 2601
Email: wsm@deh.gov.au

2). You can write or otherwise directly contact the minister, Ian Campbell, and tell him your opinion of the AHGA application.
The Hon. Ian Campbell, Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6277 7640 Fax: (02) 6273 6101
Email:
mailto:senator.ian.campbell@aph.gov.au

More news from Queensland after Cyclone Larry

From Darren Green and Jo Carnsew

Darren has kept in touch with some members and this extract from his latest e-mail a few weeks ago might be of wider interest...

...Last weekend we decided to go onto the tablelands, down to Innisfail, Babinda and home again. The cyclone really did make an impact.

Most of the leaves were stripped from the trees, two weeks later there was a lot of emergent growth, which was about the time we passed through. A lot of the trees had snapped in half, and of course piled up on the floor of the forest. Normally one can't see into the forest because of the trees, but now you can see quite a distance.

All the fruits from the trees have been blown onto the ground. Here, what is not eaten will rot. This of course has implications for all the animals that rely on the forest fruits for their survival. I guess we'll find out how well they adapt to change. Some people are feeding wildlife, but I'm not sure if this is the answer as they may become dependant and habituated, especially to roads where a lot of food is being placed. Also, there is the question of when to stop, as it could be several years before some trees fruit again, or grow to fruiting age...

And what about **Cyclone Monica**...?

Cyclone Monica passed over Northern Australia in April. Here is an aspect of its effect, sent by BFNC members David and Jenny Shield who live in Nhulunbuy (NT)

...damage on the land near Nhulunbuy was confined to a few branches and bunches of leaves stripped from trees. Things must have been rougher out at sea: an unusual amount of sea life (mostly now dead) has been dumped on the beach - seaweed, of course, but worms of several kinds, shellfish, large starfish and sea slugs as well. We have been told of a dead dugong washed up at Yirrkala. Birds that usually stay far out to sea have come to visit, too. The beach itself has been remodelled, and the lagoon entrance blocked with sand...

Diary
The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meetings
Wednesday, June 14 7.30pm
Mark Antos from 'Birds Australia' (Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union) will talk about 'ecology and conservation of ground-foraging birds in Northern Victoria'.

Sneak preview of September topic: This talk will (hopefully) be about recovery of rare plants. Two of these are orchids from the Bendigo district.
For details of speakers for the next few months, see next *Whirrakee*.

Excursions
The June excursion will go to explore Bendigo region landscapes, please see page 3 for details of the June excursion
$10.00 for the bus, please ring Richard Goonan (0423418815) if you intend to come.

...also see page 3 for the July excursion (note that there has been a change of date for that one, and the bus is $20.00).

The February edition of *Whirrakee* (page 3) had the entire 2006 excursion program but look out for updates and occasional changes.

Fauna Group
This group meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

Wednesday, June 28 7.30pm
Common (Indian) Myna

Fauna Excursions
Every Friday morning starting at around 9 to 9:30, the Fauna Group inspects nest boxes in the Spring Gully area. The excursions are led by Maurie Lewis, 16 Vains St. Golden Square. Phone 0407 427 179 or 5442 1813. Phone Maurie to confirm exact departure times and location. If you don't phone but go directly to Maurie's house and find nobody at the house between 9 and 9:30 then the excursion is not on.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need.
Phone: 0419 356433.

Bendigo Field Naturalists on the web
Any comments about the site are most welcome.
http://communitysites.impulse.net.au/bendigofieldnaturalists/fnats.html

---